

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:31,700

2

00:00:31,700 --> 00:00:33,620

Washington, McClelland, 63.

3

00:00:33,620 --> 00:00:36,320

4

00:00:36,320 --> 00:00:41,600

Roswell McClelland, you finished
your career as an ambassador--

5

00:00:41,600 --> 00:00:44,130

[SPEAKING FRENCH]

6

00:00:44,130 --> 00:00:50,460

7

00:00:50,460 --> 00:00:54,220

Washington, McClelland, 64.

8

00:00:54,220 --> 00:00:56,680

Roswell McClelland, you
finished your career

9

00:00:56,680 --> 00:01:03,110

as an ambassador of the United
States in Africa, I think.

10

00:01:03,110 --> 00:01:08,420

Republic of Niger, not to
be confused with Nigeria.

11

00:01:08,420 --> 00:01:11,796

Yes, but you have
more well known

12

00:01:11,796 --> 00:01:17,510

from us for your achievements
as a representative of the World

13
00:01:17,510 --> 00:01:23,840
Refugee Board in
Switzerland where you had

14
00:01:23,840 --> 00:01:28,190
one must say fantastic activity.

15
00:01:28,190 --> 00:01:30,410
You did really
everything you could

16
00:01:30,410 --> 00:01:36,860
do to rescue the people
who could be rescued.

17
00:01:36,860 --> 00:01:39,620
But I would like
to ask you before,

18
00:01:39,620 --> 00:01:42,530
how did it happen that
you were appointed

19
00:01:42,530 --> 00:01:45,700
as a representative of
the War Refugee Board.

20
00:01:45,700 --> 00:01:50,210
What was, shortly, your
background before this?

21
00:01:50,210 --> 00:01:52,550
Well, I'm not sure,
Claude, that we

22
00:01:52,550 --> 00:01:54,440
can refer to it as fantastic.

23
00:01:54,440 --> 00:01:57,500
But that's a subject
we can come back to.

24

00:01:57,500 --> 00:02:00,050

Well, I went to Europe-- my
wife and I went to Europe

25

00:02:00,050 --> 00:02:04,700

in July 1940.

26

00:02:04,700 --> 00:02:08,570

I had been granted a fellowship
for purposes of study

27

00:02:08,570 --> 00:02:10,580

abroad that spring.

28

00:02:10,580 --> 00:02:15,530

I was working for a doctorate
in comparative literature,

29

00:02:15,530 --> 00:02:18,170

French, Italian, German
literature at Columbia

30

00:02:18,170 --> 00:02:20,270

and received a fellowship
that was administered

31

00:02:20,270 --> 00:02:25,040

by the American Friends Service
Committee in Philadelphia.

32

00:02:25,040 --> 00:02:26,540

My connections to--

33

00:02:26,540 --> 00:02:29,160

Excuse me, what was the American
Friends Service Committee?

34

00:02:29,160 --> 00:02:29,900

Could you say this in two words?

35

00:02:29,900 --> 00:02:32,060

Well, the American

36

00:02:32,060 --> 00:02:38,330

is, shall I say, the practical
relief arm of the American

37

00:02:38,330 --> 00:02:39,710

Society of Friends.

38

00:02:39,710 --> 00:02:43,850

The formal name for the Quakers
being the Society of Friends,

39

00:02:43,850 --> 00:02:47,180

originally England George Fox.

40

00:02:47,180 --> 00:02:48,740

Are you yourself a Quaker?

41

00:02:48,740 --> 00:02:51,500

I am not formally a member.

42

00:02:51,500 --> 00:02:55,790

Membership in the
Quakers implies--

43

00:02:55,790 --> 00:02:58,340

involves membership
in a yearly meeting.

44

00:02:58,340 --> 00:03:00,080

And I did not join one.

45

00:03:00,080 --> 00:03:02,090

My wife's family were Quakers.

46

00:03:02,090 --> 00:03:05,450

And she belonged to
a yearly meeting.

47

00:03:05,450 --> 00:03:11,090

I had some Quakers on the

my mother's family's side.

48

00:03:11,090 --> 00:03:14,300

On the other hand,
I've philosophically

49

00:03:14,300 --> 00:03:19,940

sympathized with their point of
view, their emphasis on action,

50

00:03:19,940 --> 00:03:26,880

on content rather
than form, commitment

51

00:03:26,880 --> 00:03:29,070

to a Christian way
of life and action,

52

00:03:29,070 --> 00:03:32,970

rather than going to church
on Sunday, the formalities.

53

00:03:32,970 --> 00:03:39,430

Well, the war that
spring of 1940 worsened.

54

00:03:39,430 --> 00:03:42,000

France fell.

55

00:03:42,000 --> 00:03:44,820

It became apparent that
I probably would not

56

00:03:44,820 --> 00:03:49,380

get a passport from the United
States government, whose

57

00:03:49,380 --> 00:03:53,220

passport matters were controlled
by a very famous and formidable

58

00:03:53,220 --> 00:03:55,100

lady named Ruth Shipley.

59

00:03:55,100 --> 00:03:56,850

She was the head of
the passport division.

60

00:03:56,850 --> 00:04:00,510

She was head of the
passport division.

61

00:04:00,510 --> 00:04:04,297

Wouldn't get a passport to
go for purposes of study.

62

00:04:04,297 --> 00:04:05,880

The American Friends
Service Committee

63

00:04:05,880 --> 00:04:09,930

that had my background
curriculum vitae because

64

00:04:09,930 --> 00:04:13,410

of this scholarship
application found

65

00:04:13,410 --> 00:04:15,990

that I spoke a little
German and some Italian

66

00:04:15,990 --> 00:04:19,440

having studied as a younger
man in Italy for a while

67

00:04:19,440 --> 00:04:23,880

and asked me if I
wouldn't go and take

68

00:04:23,880 --> 00:04:29,280

over a small refugee office,
which they had in Rome,

69

00:04:29,280 --> 00:04:31,320

that opened about a year before.

70
00:04:31,320 --> 00:04:33,930
The man who was
there had to leave.

71
00:04:33,930 --> 00:04:36,630
I said I would be very
interested in doing so,

72
00:04:36,630 --> 00:04:40,890
because this would
get me to Europe.

73
00:04:40,890 --> 00:04:45,420
None of us knew how long
the war would last then.

74
00:04:45,420 --> 00:04:48,420
I'd be at least
in position to get

75
00:04:48,420 --> 00:04:53,130
at some material in the library
of the University of Geneva

76
00:04:53,130 --> 00:04:56,580
that I was specifically
interested in for a thesis.

77
00:04:56,580 --> 00:04:59,130
Yes.

78
00:04:59,130 --> 00:05:02,160
We had a little trouble getting
permission from my wife to go.

79
00:05:02,160 --> 00:05:03,810
We hadn't been
married very long.

80
00:05:03,810 --> 00:05:05,670
And Mrs. Shipley
suggested perhaps

81
00:05:05,670 --> 00:05:06,960
I would like to go alone.

82
00:05:06,960 --> 00:05:11,250
And I told Mrs. Shipley
that I didn't think I would.

83
00:05:11,250 --> 00:05:14,490
And we went through
various chinoiserie,

84
00:05:14,490 --> 00:05:18,120
one of the most extreme of which
was, couldn't my wife travel

85
00:05:18,120 --> 00:05:21,600
by the Trans-Siberian
Railroad in order

86
00:05:21,600 --> 00:05:24,960
to reach Western
Europe without going

87
00:05:24,960 --> 00:05:27,060
through enemy-controlled
territory.

88
00:05:27,060 --> 00:05:30,750
I mean that being the Italian
airline from Lisbon to Rome.

89
00:05:30,750 --> 00:05:33,870

90
00:05:33,870 --> 00:05:34,990
That was settled.

91
00:05:34,990 --> 00:05:37,980
The Quakers have their ways
of doing things quietly

92

00:05:37,980 --> 00:05:39,090
and persuasively.

93
00:05:39,090 --> 00:05:43,080
And James Vale of the
committee in Philadelphia

94
00:05:43,080 --> 00:05:46,320
succeeded in talking
Mrs. Shipley into giving

95
00:05:46,320 --> 00:05:47,805
my wife a passport too.

96
00:05:47,805 --> 00:05:50,310
And I didn't want
to leave her behind.

97
00:05:50,310 --> 00:05:53,130
And what was your action
in Rome on behalf of the--

98
00:05:53,130 --> 00:05:55,230
Well, that was a
small office in which

99
00:05:55,230 --> 00:06:01,470
we were doing a fill-in
job, mainly concerned

100
00:06:01,470 --> 00:06:05,140
with refugees from Central
Europe, the majority of whom

101
00:06:05,140 --> 00:06:06,630
were Jewish refugees.

102
00:06:06,630 --> 00:06:09,030
This was 1940 recall.

103
00:06:09,030 --> 00:06:12,100
But it was after
the fall of Poland.

104
00:06:12,100 --> 00:06:15,810
There were also non-Jewish
refugees, Polish refugees

105
00:06:15,810 --> 00:06:17,280
with Catholic connections.

106
00:06:17,280 --> 00:06:19,830

107
00:06:19,830 --> 00:06:24,600
We helped people
in transit refugees

108
00:06:24,600 --> 00:06:28,800
who had living expenses
in Rome, prices of a visa

109
00:06:28,800 --> 00:06:31,890
and air tickets
from Rome to Lisbon,

110
00:06:31,890 --> 00:06:34,680
which was the only
place they could get out

111
00:06:34,680 --> 00:06:39,480
of Europe in that period.

112
00:06:39,480 --> 00:06:42,690
There was, as you
undoubtedly know,

113
00:06:42,690 --> 00:06:46,230
a block of visas
negotiated by the Vatican

114
00:06:46,230 --> 00:06:50,970
with the Brazilian government
for Catholic refugees,

115

00:06:50,970 --> 00:06:56,850
I think 2,500, to go
to Brazil from Europe.

116
00:06:56,850 --> 00:07:03,270
Actually, many of these
refugees were in Nazi terms

117
00:07:03,270 --> 00:07:08,070
Jews, racial Jews
as they put it,

118
00:07:08,070 --> 00:07:12,120
who were religiously Catholics.

119
00:07:12,120 --> 00:07:18,930
Some of it, as we all knew,
were also baptismal certificates

120
00:07:18,930 --> 00:07:21,030
of the complaisance--

121
00:07:21,030 --> 00:07:23,790
The Vatican was interested
in helping the--

122
00:07:23,790 --> 00:07:27,870
Apparently, I don't know
quite for what reasons.

123
00:07:27,870 --> 00:07:32,100
I don't know the history of
this negotiation with Brazil.

124
00:07:32,100 --> 00:07:34,530
The American Joint
Distribution Committee

125
00:07:34,530 --> 00:07:36,330
was paying for
the transportation

126
00:07:36,330 --> 00:07:39,810

between Lisbon and Brazil.

127
00:07:39,810 --> 00:07:43,140
So our main job, on
a very small scale,

128
00:07:43,140 --> 00:07:46,800
was helping these people
with their getting out

129
00:07:46,800 --> 00:07:49,920
of Rome expeditiously.

130
00:07:49,920 --> 00:07:51,990
This was your main
activity in Rome?

131
00:07:51,990 --> 00:07:52,590
Yes.

132
00:07:52,590 --> 00:07:53,520
Yes.

133
00:07:53,520 --> 00:07:54,930
A small relief job.

134
00:07:54,930 --> 00:07:55,470
Yes.

135
00:07:55,470 --> 00:08:00,030
When did you leave Italy
and for which country?

136
00:08:00,030 --> 00:08:04,950
We stayed in Italy until,
as I recall, July 1941,

137
00:08:04,950 --> 00:08:09,030
because at that time there
was a reciprocal blocking

138
00:08:09,030 --> 00:08:14,490

of funds between the American
and the Italian governments.

139
00:08:14,490 --> 00:08:16,500
America, of course,
was not in the war yet.

140
00:08:16,500 --> 00:08:18,720
The British were.

141
00:08:18,720 --> 00:08:21,000
I don't know what the
origin of that was.

142
00:08:21,000 --> 00:08:23,760
But there was reprisal
and counter-reprisal.

143
00:08:23,760 --> 00:08:25,140
We closed their consulates.

144
00:08:25,140 --> 00:08:26,510
And they called is ours.

145
00:08:26,510 --> 00:08:29,160
And we couldn't get
money any longer.

146
00:08:29,160 --> 00:08:31,040
So we had to close
up the office.

147
00:08:31,040 --> 00:08:33,679
And Marjorie and I, my
wife, were transferred

148
00:08:33,679 --> 00:08:39,260
to the American Friends Service
Committee office in Marseilles,

149
00:08:39,260 --> 00:08:43,730
which had been operating
there since the latter days

150
00:08:43,730 --> 00:08:48,170
of the Spanish Civil War,
a big operation in France

151
00:08:48,170 --> 00:08:53,070
with refugees that came
over the Pyrenees in '39.

152
00:08:53,070 --> 00:08:53,570
Yes.

153
00:08:53,570 --> 00:08:55,490
And you stayed in
France till when?

154
00:08:55,490 --> 00:08:58,340
We stayed in France
a little over a year.

155
00:08:58,340 --> 00:09:02,390
I suppose it was perhaps July
or August, early August '41

156
00:09:02,390 --> 00:09:03,290
that we got there.

157
00:09:03,290 --> 00:09:07,640
And we left in September '42.

158
00:09:07,640 --> 00:09:08,780
For Switzerland?

159
00:09:08,780 --> 00:09:12,890
For Switzerland,
because the committee

160
00:09:12,890 --> 00:09:17,900
was buying such relief
supplies as could

161
00:09:17,900 --> 00:09:20,840

be found in Europe,
in Switzerland,

162
00:09:20,840 --> 00:09:23,150
particularly things
like powdered milk

163
00:09:23,150 --> 00:09:29,100
and medical supplies and
strange things like false teeth.

164
00:09:29,100 --> 00:09:32,030
You may wonder why people
bought false teeth.

165
00:09:32,030 --> 00:09:34,790
But one of the very
serious problems

166
00:09:34,790 --> 00:09:39,560
with the refugees in the camps
in France, the old people

167
00:09:39,560 --> 00:09:43,670
was that they couldn't eat
if they didn't have teeth.

168
00:09:43,670 --> 00:09:46,010
A lot of them had
lost their false teeth

169
00:09:46,010 --> 00:09:46,990
or didn't have them.

170
00:09:46,990 --> 00:09:50,870
So that was a strange
little side line.

171
00:09:50,870 --> 00:09:54,050
This was part of the relief?

172
00:09:54,050 --> 00:09:54,620
Yes.

173
00:09:54,620 --> 00:09:57,770
You had some very bad
situations in France.

174
00:09:57,770 --> 00:10:03,920
There was in the
infamous camp of Gurs,

175
00:10:03,920 --> 00:10:10,230
a very large group of Jewish
expellees from Baden and Pfalz.

176
00:10:10,230 --> 00:10:11,900
Ah, this was the
famous transport--

177
00:10:11,900 --> 00:10:18,470
You remember the time the Nazis
gathered up everybody, Kind und

178
00:10:18,470 --> 00:10:23,540
Kegel, from the lunatic asylum
to the old people's home,

179
00:10:23,540 --> 00:10:28,490
and loaded them on trains
and sent them in the--

180
00:10:28,490 --> 00:10:30,530
also with a
contingent of Gypsies.

181
00:10:30,530 --> 00:10:32,090
Hitler for some
reason I don't quite

182
00:10:32,090 --> 00:10:33,920
understand never like Gypsies.

183
00:10:33,920 --> 00:10:35,510
I'm sure they didn't
like him either.

184
00:10:35,510 --> 00:10:40,640
But I talked later to the
prefect in that department.

185
00:10:40,640 --> 00:10:45,320
And he on 48 hours notice
received 8,000 people

186
00:10:45,320 --> 00:10:50,150
and was told, debrouillez
vous, mon ami, more or less.

187
00:10:50,150 --> 00:10:51,740
Well, he had a bad time.

188
00:10:51,740 --> 00:10:53,810
Yes, and the conditions
were very bad?

189
00:10:53,810 --> 00:10:55,370
The conditions were very bad.

190
00:10:55,370 --> 00:10:58,255
It was an old
Spanish refugee camp.

191
00:10:58,255 --> 00:11:01,650
[AUDIO OUT]

192
00:11:01,650 --> 00:11:11,920

193
00:11:11,920 --> 00:11:15,630
Washington, McClelland, 65.

194
00:11:15,630 --> 00:11:22,420
Well, I have heard that you went
to Vichy in the summer of 1942

195
00:11:22,420 --> 00:11:28,420
when deportations of the

foreign Jews were taking place.

196

00:11:28,420 --> 00:11:32,110

It started, at least
as far as we were--

197

00:11:32,110 --> 00:11:35,150

within our small
sphere in France,

198

00:11:35,150 --> 00:11:39,250

which was concerned with the
camps for foreign refugees,

199

00:11:39,250 --> 00:11:42,220

primarily Jewish refugees,
although good many

200

00:11:42,220 --> 00:11:45,700

Spaniards in Rivesaltes.

201

00:11:45,700 --> 00:11:47,590

But when it started
at Les Milles,

202

00:11:47,590 --> 00:11:50,600

which was an old brick factory--

203

00:11:50,600 --> 00:11:54,130

it's near Aix-en-Provence
near Marseilles, where there

204

00:11:54,130 --> 00:11:57,640

were perhaps 600 or 700 people.

205

00:11:57,640 --> 00:12:01,630

And the relief organizations,
the Jewish organizations

206

00:12:01,630 --> 00:12:04,480

obviously, first began
to pick up information

207

00:12:04,480 --> 00:12:07,690

that there was some
sort of a deportation

208

00:12:07,690 --> 00:12:10,960

action in the making.

209

00:12:10,960 --> 00:12:15,690

210

00:12:15,690 --> 00:12:23,190

We went, myself and the man who
headed the Quaker organization,

211

00:12:23,190 --> 00:12:27,310

a man named Noble, at that
time in Marseilles, to Vichy.

212

00:12:27,310 --> 00:12:32,970

I guess it was about
the 4th of August.

213

00:12:32,970 --> 00:12:33,990

1942?

214

00:12:33,990 --> 00:12:42,660

1942, to try to get at Marshal
Petain, in the first instance,

215

00:12:42,660 --> 00:12:44,550

although really more Laval.

216

00:12:44,550 --> 00:12:47,160

217

00:12:47,160 --> 00:12:51,330

We were helped a good deal by
a man named Dr. Menetral, who

218

00:12:51,330 --> 00:12:55,740

was I think one of Petain's,
in Petain's cabinet,

219
00:12:55,740 --> 00:12:57,950
were the director of
the cabinet, a nice man.

220
00:12:57,950 --> 00:12:58,950
He was director of the--

221
00:12:58,950 --> 00:13:00,325
His heart was in
the right place.

222
00:13:00,325 --> 00:13:03,960

223
00:13:03,960 --> 00:13:07,850
We had a preliminary
interview with him.

224
00:13:07,850 --> 00:13:12,300
We told him that we feared
this whole action of rounding

225
00:13:12,300 --> 00:13:14,490
these people up,
shipping them to Paris,

226
00:13:14,490 --> 00:13:16,110
and allegedly they
were going to be

227
00:13:16,110 --> 00:13:18,930
shipped to Poland to the
East somewhere in Europe

228
00:13:18,930 --> 00:13:21,360
by the Germans.

229
00:13:21,360 --> 00:13:24,270
The intimations
were certainly not

230

00:13:24,270 --> 00:13:30,960
of immortality, but very much
of mortality of this plan.

231
00:13:30,960 --> 00:13:34,080

232
00:13:34,080 --> 00:13:35,760
We had a rather difficult time.

233
00:13:35,760 --> 00:13:38,190
These people were uncomfortable.

234
00:13:38,190 --> 00:13:41,250
Obviously, Menetral didn't
know anything about this.

235
00:13:41,250 --> 00:13:45,390
Another man who was in
the Laval's cabinet--

236
00:13:45,390 --> 00:13:49,050
I'd forgotten what his
name was-- a Mr. Vilar whom

237
00:13:49,050 --> 00:13:54,540
we talked also was uncomfortable
about this and Laval

238
00:13:54,540 --> 00:13:58,450
was a very busy man and it
would be hard to see him.

239
00:13:58,450 --> 00:14:02,700
But anyway, partly
by happenstance,

240
00:14:02,700 --> 00:14:11,820
because I wrote in a report that
I made about six months later

241
00:14:11,820 --> 00:14:16,110
when I got to Geneva

and got out of France,

242

00:14:16,110 --> 00:14:19,200
we had been in Menetral's--

243

00:14:19,200 --> 00:14:21,340
or we were going up
to Menetral's office.

244

00:14:21,340 --> 00:14:23,460
This was in one of
the big old hotels

245

00:14:23,460 --> 00:14:26,910
in Vichy, Hotel du
Parc or something.

246

00:14:26,910 --> 00:14:28,920
As we walked down
the corridor, we

247

00:14:28,920 --> 00:14:32,490
saw Laval along with
Menetral and some others

248

00:14:32,490 --> 00:14:35,400
at the far end of the corridor.

249

00:14:35,400 --> 00:14:38,610
And Menetral immediately
said a few words to Laval

250

00:14:38,610 --> 00:14:39,810
and beckoned to us.

251

00:14:39,810 --> 00:14:41,790
We had not been
granted an interview.

252

00:14:41,790 --> 00:14:42,930
This was just by chance.

253

00:14:42,930 --> 00:14:47,100

254

00:14:47,100 --> 00:14:49,350

The four of us--

255

00:14:49,350 --> 00:14:51,930

Laval, Menetral, Lindsley

Noble and myself--

256

00:14:51,930 --> 00:14:53,340

went into Menetral's office.

257

00:14:53,340 --> 00:14:57,720

Laval conceded to go
into the office with us.

258

00:14:57,720 --> 00:15:00,690

I wrote at the time that I felt
it would be stretching a point

259

00:15:00,690 --> 00:15:02,670

to say that we were
allowed to present

260

00:15:02,670 --> 00:15:07,950

our plea in any sort
of coherent fashion.

261

00:15:07,950 --> 00:15:10,050

We--

262

00:15:10,050 --> 00:15:11,740

Washington, McClelland, 66.

263

00:15:11,740 --> 00:15:15,020

264

00:15:15,020 --> 00:15:17,700

Well, rather than a discussion,
this was really-- we

265

00:15:17,700 --> 00:15:20,970
listened to a
monologue delivered

266
00:15:20,970 --> 00:15:26,070
by Laval, which consisted of
a tirade against the Jews,

267
00:15:26,070 --> 00:15:30,210
particularly the
foreign Jews in France.

268
00:15:30,210 --> 00:15:33,060
He took the categoric
stand that these people

269
00:15:33,060 --> 00:15:35,400
were undesirable
elements, a source

270
00:15:35,400 --> 00:15:39,540
of anti-government propaganda,
black markets practice,

271
00:15:39,540 --> 00:15:42,120
communistic activity,
et cetera, et

272
00:15:42,120 --> 00:15:47,010
cetera, that the French
government hadn't wanted

273
00:15:47,010 --> 00:15:49,920
these people in the
first place, had been

274
00:15:49,920 --> 00:15:51,780
magnanimous in receiving them.

275
00:15:51,780 --> 00:15:55,980
They were ungrateful
for this asylum.

276

00:15:55,980 --> 00:15:58,440
The French government
accordingly,

277
00:15:58,440 --> 00:16:00,840
with reference to this
deportation, he said,

278
00:16:00,840 --> 00:16:03,810
asked nothing better
than to be rid of them.

279
00:16:03,810 --> 00:16:07,965
He said, debarasser de, I have
here were his specific terms.

280
00:16:07,965 --> 00:16:11,670

281
00:16:11,670 --> 00:16:15,120
Fortunately, this
coincided with the policy

282
00:16:15,120 --> 00:16:18,330
on the part of the Germans
to take these people back

283
00:16:18,330 --> 00:16:20,820
and establish a
special center, what

284
00:16:20,820 --> 00:16:25,350
he called an ethnic
reservation, in a reserve

285
00:16:25,350 --> 00:16:28,980
ethnique in Poland, where
the Jews would live and work

286
00:16:28,980 --> 00:16:29,480
together.

287
00:16:29,480 --> 00:16:29,980

Yes.

288

00:16:29,980 --> 00:16:31,570

This was a famous idea.

289

00:16:31,570 --> 00:16:33,950

It was a Lublin Reserve.

290

00:16:33,950 --> 00:16:34,665

It was.

291

00:16:34,665 --> 00:16:37,890

In this area of Lublin,
that was the extermination

292

00:16:37,890 --> 00:16:38,886

camps were set up.

293

00:16:38,886 --> 00:16:39,730

But this was--

294

00:16:39,730 --> 00:16:40,560

Were killed there--

295

00:16:40,560 --> 00:16:43,590

This was a Potemkin's
village sort of idea,

296

00:16:43,590 --> 00:16:46,430

to confuse the outside world.

297

00:16:46,430 --> 00:16:48,190

Uh, huh.

298

00:16:48,190 --> 00:16:51,450

Well, at this point,
Menetral interjected

299

00:16:51,450 --> 00:16:53,790

that we felt the
German measures were

300

00:16:53,790 --> 00:16:56,880
to exterminate these people.

301

00:16:56,880 --> 00:17:01,310
Herr Laval waved this
aside as pure fiction.

302

00:17:01,310 --> 00:17:04,380
He qualified as preposterous.

303

00:17:04,380 --> 00:17:06,569
And he then
continued on the vein

304

00:17:06,569 --> 00:17:09,420
and in an interrogatory
tone that if the government

305

00:17:09,420 --> 00:17:12,970
of the United States was so
pro-semitic, why hadn't we

306

00:17:12,970 --> 00:17:15,760
take in these people in
instead of merely criticizing

307

00:17:15,760 --> 00:17:19,780
the French for not
treating them properly?

308

00:17:19,780 --> 00:17:22,300
How many Jews did
we have anyway?

309

00:17:22,300 --> 00:17:24,490
5 million?

310

00:17:24,490 --> 00:17:27,940
He said, Mr. Tuck, the
then the American charge,

311

00:17:27,940 --> 00:17:29,117

had told him, and I--

312
00:17:29,117 --> 00:17:33,000

313
00:17:33,000 --> 00:17:34,778
Washington, McClelland, 67.

314
00:17:34,778 --> 00:17:37,710

315
00:17:37,710 --> 00:17:41,220
We were talking about Laval's
remarks on the subject

316
00:17:41,220 --> 00:17:44,640
of the American pro--

317
00:17:44,640 --> 00:17:47,400
Excuse me, you told
him specifically

318
00:17:47,400 --> 00:17:50,340
that you were afraid that--

319
00:17:50,340 --> 00:17:51,840
They were going to exterminate--

320
00:17:51,840 --> 00:17:53,760
It would mean to exterminate.

321
00:17:53,760 --> 00:17:55,470
And thinking back
on this I don't

322
00:17:55,470 --> 00:17:58,880
know where that information
came from specifically.

323
00:17:58,880 --> 00:18:01,980
I have no recollection
at that time

324
00:18:01,980 --> 00:18:05,850
of having seen any authentic
reports that people were being,

325
00:18:05,850 --> 00:18:08,700
in that sense, exterminated.

326
00:18:08,700 --> 00:18:11,550
So it must have
been the grapevine.

327
00:18:11,550 --> 00:18:14,370
But this was really
your feeling?

328
00:18:14,370 --> 00:18:16,320
Well, I believe--

329
00:18:16,320 --> 00:18:19,417
I stated it three times here
in this report that I wrote.

330
00:18:19,417 --> 00:18:20,250
And we mentioned it.

331
00:18:20,250 --> 00:18:22,170
And we wouldn't have
said that had there not

332
00:18:22,170 --> 00:18:24,165
been some reason to believe it.

333
00:18:24,165 --> 00:18:26,670
But he waived.

334
00:18:26,670 --> 00:18:27,330
Pardon?

335
00:18:27,330 --> 00:18:28,920
Laval just didn't--

336

00:18:28,920 --> 00:18:33,630

Yes, he dismissed this as
preposterous, pure fiction.

337

00:18:33,630 --> 00:18:35,740

I don't imagine he
believed it himself.

338

00:18:35,740 --> 00:18:36,600

I don't really know.

339

00:18:36,600 --> 00:18:40,590

340

00:18:40,590 --> 00:18:42,640

And then he went
into the tack about,

341

00:18:42,640 --> 00:18:45,090

well, if you in
the United States--

342

00:18:45,090 --> 00:18:47,670

If you like so much the Jews
why don't you take them?

343

00:18:47,670 --> 00:18:52,030

Yeah, if you like him
so much, take him.

344

00:18:52,030 --> 00:18:53,940

He went on and made
similar remarks

345

00:18:53,940 --> 00:18:59,190

about the British government
who'd offered money.

346

00:18:59,190 --> 00:19:01,880

But the British hadn't
agreed to take these people

347

00:19:01,880 --> 00:19:02,880
in their country either.

348
00:19:02,880 --> 00:19:05,790

349
00:19:05,790 --> 00:19:08,130
Menetral at that point
again interjected

350
00:19:08,130 --> 00:19:10,200
that we feared that
such a move on the part

351
00:19:10,200 --> 00:19:13,020
of the French government would
have serious repercussions

352
00:19:13,020 --> 00:19:14,100
in the United States--

353
00:19:14,100 --> 00:19:16,350
we were then using
what political argument

354
00:19:16,350 --> 00:19:19,260
we could bring out--
and might jeopardize

355
00:19:19,260 --> 00:19:22,740
the future of American
relief work, our relief work,

356
00:19:22,740 --> 00:19:24,800
in France.

357
00:19:24,800 --> 00:19:29,520
Had we been more politically
knowledgeable at that time,

358
00:19:29,520 --> 00:19:31,230
we probably would
have said relations

359

00:19:31,230 --> 00:19:33,250
with the whole of France.

360

00:19:33,250 --> 00:19:35,910
Laval rejoindered
words to the effect

361

00:19:35,910 --> 00:19:39,060
that the Americans had raised
a hue and cry in the past

362

00:19:39,060 --> 00:19:41,940
and they probably would
again in the future,

363

00:19:41,940 --> 00:19:45,330
implying that these words didn't
interest him or worry him,

364

00:19:45,330 --> 00:19:47,700
but that only
action would count.

365

00:19:47,700 --> 00:19:50,220
And he went on and
reiterated the whole business

366

00:19:50,220 --> 00:19:52,350
again about the
undesirablability

367

00:19:52,350 --> 00:19:54,810
of foreign Jews in France.

368

00:19:54,810 --> 00:19:56,320
They were internationalists.

369

00:19:56,320 --> 00:20:00,150
They never wished to become
good citizens of any country.

370

00:20:00,150 --> 00:20:04,500

They'd always been more
harm to France than help.

371

00:20:04,500 --> 00:20:07,650

Ingrat, the term was used.

372

00:20:07,650 --> 00:20:10,830

How he could say any
such thing in view--

373

00:20:10,830 --> 00:20:13,440

And did you answer something?

374

00:20:13,440 --> 00:20:18,600

No, we really didn't want to
get into an argument with him.

375

00:20:18,600 --> 00:20:21,300

In fact, as I recall, we
were not given an opportunity

376

00:20:21,300 --> 00:20:22,990

to say much of anything.

377

00:20:22,990 --> 00:20:27,040

This was a kind of a tirade
and a monologue on his part.

378

00:20:27,040 --> 00:20:28,380

He was uncomfortable.

379

00:20:28,380 --> 00:20:31,320

We grabbed him on the fly.

380

00:20:31,320 --> 00:20:33,960

We didn't have a
regular appointment.

381

00:20:33,960 --> 00:20:36,460

Then he went on,
interestingly enough,

382

00:20:36,460 --> 00:20:39,330

as for their own
French Jews, that

383

00:20:39,330 --> 00:20:44,010

was another question since
they were born in France

384

00:20:44,010 --> 00:20:47,940

and in any event were
France's responsibility

385

00:20:47,940 --> 00:20:51,840

and that adequate legislation
and controls had been

386

00:20:51,840 --> 00:20:54,520

established concerning them.

387

00:20:54,520 --> 00:20:55,930

And I can remember Laval--

388

00:20:55,930 --> 00:20:58,680

something that I did not
record in here-- saying

389

00:20:58,680 --> 00:21:06,030

at the end of all this, in order
to protect our own French Jews,

390

00:21:06,030 --> 00:21:08,235

we're giving them the
foreign Jews first.

391

00:21:08,235 --> 00:21:11,070

392

00:21:11,070 --> 00:21:12,030

Yes.

393

00:21:12,030 --> 00:21:16,440

Of course, they got

everybody in the end,

394

00:21:16,440 --> 00:21:19,630

whether he knew that or not
that was going to happen.

395

00:21:19,630 --> 00:21:22,080

And did you talk with
him about the children?

396

00:21:22,080 --> 00:21:24,540

We went in to various
specific points

397

00:21:24,540 --> 00:21:26,310

that we tried to get out of him.

398

00:21:26,310 --> 00:21:28,800

Could people be exempted
who were holding

399

00:21:28,800 --> 00:21:30,960

American immigration
visas or who

400

00:21:30,960 --> 00:21:33,930

had promise of getting
American immigration

401

00:21:33,930 --> 00:21:38,850

visas, the children that
came under the Program

402

00:21:38,850 --> 00:21:42,630

for European immigration
of European children

403

00:21:42,630 --> 00:21:44,535

from refugee camps in France.

404

00:21:44,535 --> 00:21:47,790

405

00:21:47,790 --> 00:21:50,250

A problem.

406

00:21:50,250 --> 00:21:53,020

Washington, McClelland, 68.

407

00:21:53,020 --> 00:21:58,470

Well, the War Refugee Board
was created in January '44.

408

00:21:58,470 --> 00:22:00,480

This means very late.

409

00:22:00,480 --> 00:22:05,580

Already 5 millions of
Jews, about 5 million

410

00:22:05,580 --> 00:22:07,720

had already been killed.

411

00:22:07,720 --> 00:22:08,220

Really?

412

00:22:08,220 --> 00:22:09,540

That many by that time?

413

00:22:09,540 --> 00:22:10,520

I didn't realize that.

414

00:22:10,520 --> 00:22:11,460

Oh, yes.

415

00:22:11,460 --> 00:22:14,280

And you write yourself a report.

416

00:22:14,280 --> 00:22:17,990

You delivered at the
end of your activities

417

00:22:17,990 --> 00:22:23,250

a report which summarize your

activities headings the War

418

00:22:23,250 --> 00:22:26,490

Refugee Board in Switzerland,
which was obviously

419

00:22:26,490 --> 00:22:28,410

a key point, Switzerland--

420

00:22:28,410 --> 00:22:30,000

Geographically certainly.

421

00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:31,230

Yes.

422

00:22:31,230 --> 00:22:35,010

You write that we
didn't begin to--

423

00:22:35,010 --> 00:22:37,920

with real humility--
that you didn't

424

00:22:37,920 --> 00:22:43,020

begin to fight until very
late, and that the board was

425

00:22:43,020 --> 00:22:47,730

created the 11th hour.

426

00:22:47,730 --> 00:22:52,140

Well, could you give some
general explanations?

427

00:22:52,140 --> 00:22:57,780

How do you explain that the
board was created so late?

428

00:22:57,780 --> 00:23:00,150

What were the shortcomings?

429

00:23:00,150 --> 00:23:02,040

What forbad--

430

00:23:02,040 --> 00:23:04,650

431

00:23:04,650 --> 00:23:07,080

Well, obviously, it was
something that was--

432

00:23:07,080 --> 00:23:09,720

433

00:23:09,720 --> 00:23:13,920

you worried about why was it
not possible for a country as

434

00:23:13,920 --> 00:23:16,530

powerful and influential
as the United States

435

00:23:16,530 --> 00:23:20,970

to have done something more
a lot sooner, particularly

436

00:23:20,970 --> 00:23:24,480

a country with as a large and
influential a Jewish community

437

00:23:24,480 --> 00:23:28,500

as we had in the United States.

438

00:23:28,500 --> 00:23:31,920

I think there are
various explanations.

439

00:23:31,920 --> 00:23:34,290

As in most affairs
of man, there is

440

00:23:34,290 --> 00:23:38,400

no one open-and-shut
explanation or black and white.

441

00:23:38,400 --> 00:23:41,070

It's a mixture.

442

00:23:41,070 --> 00:23:45,780

I'm sure many people had no
idea of what was happening.

443

00:23:45,780 --> 00:23:48,388

Many Germans I think
had no idea what was

444

00:23:48,388 --> 00:23:49,680

happening in their own country.

445

00:23:49,680 --> 00:23:52,470

446

00:23:52,470 --> 00:23:57,090

But did the leaders, the
political leaders of the United

447

00:23:57,090 --> 00:24:00,270

States, did they know?

448

00:24:00,270 --> 00:24:02,850

And I think they did.

449

00:24:02,850 --> 00:24:06,210

From what you've told me and
from what I've read and heard

450

00:24:06,210 --> 00:24:09,570

later obviously they did.

451

00:24:09,570 --> 00:24:13,170

I did not know that at the time.

452

00:24:13,170 --> 00:24:16,110

Why did they do nothing?

453

00:24:16,110 --> 00:24:20,910

The gap between the information
of what was happening

454

00:24:20,910 --> 00:24:26,730

and their norms of
living, standards,

455

00:24:26,730 --> 00:24:36,060

was so tremendous that I think
they simply didn't believe it.

456

00:24:36,060 --> 00:24:38,070

Who were the people
who were in charge

457

00:24:38,070 --> 00:24:41,880

of precisely this refugee huge
questions in the government

458

00:24:41,880 --> 00:24:42,950

of the United States?

459

00:24:42,950 --> 00:24:45,510

I don't think there was
any one organization.

460

00:24:45,510 --> 00:24:47,220

Other than in the
government, there

461

00:24:47,220 --> 00:24:49,800

were many private
organizations, like the Friends

462

00:24:49,800 --> 00:24:52,620

and the Unitarians and the
Catholic organizations that

463

00:24:52,620 --> 00:24:55,920

were interested for
humanitarian reasons

464

00:24:55,920 --> 00:24:57,810

in doing something for refugees.

465

00:24:57,810 --> 00:25:02,820

But the government qua
government, I don't think,

466

00:25:02,820 --> 00:25:05,310

was particularly
concerned, although you'd

467

00:25:05,310 --> 00:25:08,250

had some history of
refugee activity.

468

00:25:08,250 --> 00:25:10,410

What was the Evian
Conference before--

469

00:25:10,410 --> 00:25:11,880

Yes, it was in 1938--

470

00:25:11,880 --> 00:25:15,570

Some effort to do
something about refugees.

471

00:25:15,570 --> 00:25:18,400

As far as the State
Department was concerned,

472

00:25:18,400 --> 00:25:23,310

it really existed only in the
person of old George Warren,

473

00:25:23,310 --> 00:25:26,400

who was for many, many
years the State Department's

474

00:25:26,400 --> 00:25:29,370

advisor on refugees.

475

00:25:29,370 --> 00:25:33,360

But this was a marginal activity
as far as the State Department

476
00:25:33,360 --> 00:25:34,370
was concerned.

477
00:25:34,370 --> 00:25:38,130
It was not in the
mainstream of policy.

478
00:25:38,130 --> 00:25:43,980
You had the general
human inclination

479
00:25:43,980 --> 00:25:50,280
if you heard disturbing and
horrible things not to believe

480
00:25:50,280 --> 00:25:52,470
them, to stick your
head in the sand,

481
00:25:52,470 --> 00:25:56,910
because if you did believe them,
it meant that you should act

482
00:25:56,910 --> 00:25:58,510
and do something about it.

483
00:25:58,510 --> 00:26:03,510
And so it was kicked
under the carpet.

484
00:26:03,510 --> 00:26:07,020
I don't want to enter into
a polemic, not with you.

485
00:26:07,020 --> 00:26:10,710
You are not a man to
enter in the polemic way.

486
00:26:10,710 --> 00:26:14,330
But let's talk about
the State Department.

487

00:26:14,330 --> 00:26:16,990

They had very
precise information.

488

00:26:16,990 --> 00:26:18,740

They knew everything.

489

00:26:18,740 --> 00:26:22,830

And they blocked, as they say--

490

00:26:22,830 --> 00:26:27,250

Well, I can't speak to how
precise their information was.

491

00:26:27,250 --> 00:26:31,770

For example, the interview with
Laval that we spoke of earlier

492

00:26:31,770 --> 00:26:34,380

was transmitted,
a report on that,

493

00:26:34,380 --> 00:26:36,510

to the American Friends
Service Committee

494

00:26:36,510 --> 00:26:39,330

through the American
embassy in Vichy.

495

00:26:39,330 --> 00:26:43,020

Certainly, the State
Department saw those reports.

496

00:26:43,020 --> 00:26:45,090

That was not a report
on extermination.

497

00:26:45,090 --> 00:26:48,090

But it was on deportation
and certainly intimations

498

00:26:48,090 --> 00:26:51,540
of what was happening.

499
00:26:51,540 --> 00:26:56,130
Why they didn't act, I think
there were a lot of reasons--

500
00:26:56,130 --> 00:27:03,900
bureaucratic inertia,
the gap I spoke of.

501
00:27:03,900 --> 00:27:06,330
The State Department
in the old days

502
00:27:06,330 --> 00:27:09,450
was very much of what has
been called the Eastern

503
00:27:09,450 --> 00:27:19,470
Establishment, its leadership
conservative, of people

504
00:27:19,470 --> 00:27:24,490
of, in a way, somewhat
limited horizon.

505
00:27:24,490 --> 00:27:27,840
I don't wish to be
dis-obliging, but Jews

506
00:27:27,840 --> 00:27:30,330
in the opinion of
many of them I'm sure

507
00:27:30,330 --> 00:27:34,800
were people who pushed carts
with old secondhand clothing

508
00:27:34,800 --> 00:27:35,970
in them.

509
00:27:35,970 --> 00:27:39,990

I mean I've seen this same
attitude in even Switzerland

510
00:27:39,990 --> 00:27:41,340
in the Jewish community.

511
00:27:41,340 --> 00:27:45,090
The upper crust of the Basel
Jewish banking community

512
00:27:45,090 --> 00:27:53,910
had nothing to do with poor
Jews from Krakow or Gleiwitz

513
00:27:53,910 --> 00:27:55,200
or somewhere.

514
00:27:55,200 --> 00:27:58,050
Polish Eastern
Jews were regarded

515
00:27:58,050 --> 00:28:00,870
as a kind of a poor relatives.

516
00:28:00,870 --> 00:28:03,080
Did you experience such
things in Switzerland?

517
00:28:03,080 --> 00:28:06,814
I didn't directly, no.

518
00:28:06,814 --> 00:28:09,330
Our minister at that
time in Switzerland

519
00:28:09,330 --> 00:28:13,530
was a delightful gentleman
of the old school,

520
00:28:13,530 --> 00:28:18,480
of Leland Harrison,
who is now dead,

521

00:28:18,480 --> 00:28:23,520

whom I'm sure had very
little basis of training

522

00:28:23,520 --> 00:28:28,230

or orientation to understand
this sort of thing

523

00:28:28,230 --> 00:28:32,440

or have very much
sympathy with it.

524

00:28:32,440 --> 00:28:35,700

And I think the same thing in
people in the State Department,

525

00:28:35,700 --> 00:28:37,530

like--

526

00:28:37,530 --> 00:28:41,240

[SPEAKING FRENCH]

527

00:28:41,240 --> 00:28:44,590

[AUDIO OUT]

528

00:28:44,590 --> 00:29:26,000